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PFAS/Drinking Water Standards: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Commits to Development of a Drinking Water Standard

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The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (“MDEP”) stated in a January 28th letter to the Conservation Law Foundation Massachusetts and Toxics Action Center that it would:

... initiate the process, pursuant to all applicable statutes, rules and executive orders, for development of a drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for a group of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that the Department has identified as posing a significant threat to health and for which analytical methods exist for their detection and appropriate treatment technologies are available.

MDEP states that it is responding to a Petition for Rulemaking that had been submitted by Conservation Law Foundation Massachusetts and the Toxics Action Center.

The previously described chemicals have been used in various applications in consumer products such as:

- Fabrics for furniture
- Paper packaging for food and other materials resistant to water, grease, or stains
- Firefighting in airfields
- Utilization in several industrial processes

PFAS properties include resistance to heat, water, and oil. Further, they have been described as persistent in the environment and resist degradation.

MDEP states that its approach to addressing these substances will continue to be informed by:

- the soon to be initiated process regarding groundwater cleanup standards under the MCP;
- significant stakeholder input; and
- the expected growth of scientific knowledge about PFAS.

The MDEP document also addresses in some detail:

- Applicable State Law for Filing and Responding to the Petition
- The Conservation Law Foundation and Toxics Action Center Petition
- MDEP’s Primacy Responsibility for Public Water Systems in Massachusetts
- PFAS Background
- MDEP’s Activities to Date

- Office of Research and Standards Guidelines
- Drinking Water Program
- Bottled Water Testing
- Waste Site Cleanup Program
- Firefighting Foam Take-back Program
- PFAS in Wastewater Residuals
- MDEP's Response to the Petition
- MDEP Will Initiate the Process, Pursuant to All Applicable Statutes, Rules and Executive Orders, for development of a PFAS MCL
- MDEP Will Initiate the Process, Pursuant to All Applicable Statutes, Rules and Executive Orders, for development of PFAS Waste Site Cleanup Standards
- Consideration of Vermont's Drinking Water Health Advisory for PFAS
- Additional Drinking Water Program Actions on PFAS
- Additional Program Actions on PFAS
- Laboratory Certification

A copy of the MDEP document can be found [here](#).